

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
MARCH 6, 1997

PROJECT REVIEWED

Convened: 10:00 AM

Pipers Creek: Streets to Sound

SUBCOMMITTEE

Design Review Evaluation

CITY UPDATES

Seattle Center

Seattle Transportation Department

Office of Neighborhood Planning

Aquarium Master Plan

DISCUSSION

Municipal Courts

Adjourned: 6:00PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Barbara Swift, Chair

Carolyn Darwish

Gail Dubrow

Robert Foley

Gerald Hansmire

Jon Layzer

STAFF PRESENT

Marcia Wagoner

Michael Read

subcommittee:	DESIGN REVIEW EVALUATION
Swift	Discussion
Darwish	Patrick Doherty, Department of Construction and Land Use
Foley	Vince Lyons, Department of Construction and Land Use
Hansmire	Time: 2 hour (N/C)
Layzer	

Four projects that have completed the Neighborhood Commercial and Multifamily Design Review process were presented to the subcommittee by Doherty and Lyons. Commissioners requested that two round table discussions, one with architects and developers who have gone through Design Review and the other with members of the public that have been through Design Review be scheduled for the month of April.

030697.1	SEATTLE CENTER
	Discussion
	Virginia Anderson, Director
	Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Director Anderson gave the Commission a brief historical account of the Master Planning process at Seattle Center to date. Principles of the Master Planning at the Center include: opening up the edges of the center campus, respecting the surrounding street grid, preserving buildings if they can be re-used, new construction as infill, and dispersing the parking. Swift noted the interest of the Commission in public/private development partnerships in the City and was interested in the extensive experience of the Center in this arena. Anderson pointed to past Commission involvement with the Seattle Center as mediator, public meeting facilitator and contextual design advocate.

The Commission looks forward to a continued close relationship with the Seattle Center and is particularly interested in insuring that the public benefit to be gained from any public/private development partnerships entered to by the City on the Seattle Center campus return a great benefit to the people of Seattle. Given the complexity of the Seattle Center operations, the Commission would like to assign Commissioner Hansmire as a liaison between the Commission and the Seattle Center,

030697.2

SEATTLE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Discussion

Daryl Grigsby, Director

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Director Grigsby briefed the Commission on the duties and responsibilities of the newly established Seattle Transportation Department, similar to the Transportation division of the former Seattle Engineering Department. The Mission of the Department is to “maintain and improve the transportation system for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services”. The 1997 goals of the Transportation Department and of the Design Commission were discussed. Grigsby highlighted the Making Streets That Work workbook as a great tool. Feedback from the Commission, both positive and negative, was mentioned as an important form of advice.

The Commission appreciated the opportunity to better understand the newly organized Seattle Transportation Department and looks forward looks forward to a strong working relationship with the Department.

030697.3

COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 1997 Approved as amended.
- B. DESIGN REVIEW EVALUATION UPDATE Foley updated the Commission on the Design Review Evaluation progress to date.
- C. WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION AND TRADE CENTER EXPANSION A subcommittee will attend the semi-monthly WSCTC design review meetings.

030697.4

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

Discussion

Karma Ruder, Director

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Director Ruder briefed the Commission on the work of the Office of Neighborhood Planning in assisting neighborhoods to create a neighborhood plan. Seattle has thirty seven neighborhoods that have started the neighborhood planning process. The Commission offered assistance in providing a broader, City-wide perspective in the coordination of the various neighborhood plans.

The Commission looks forward to working with the Office of Neighborhood Planning and would be happy to help the City in the coordination of the various the neighborhood plans at the appropriate time.

030697.5 Project: **AQUARIUM MASTER PLAN**
Phase: Update
Presenters: Cindi Shiota, Aquarium Director
Harry Laban, Department of Parks and Recreation
Woody Wilkenson, Department of Parks and Recreation
David Hughbanks, Citizens Advisory Committee
Time: 1 hour (N/C)

The Seattle Aquarium Master Plan is the result of a two year effort to outline a vision for the Aquarium and adjacent Waterfront Park by the Central Waterfront Citizens Advisory Committee. Although a state-of-the-art facility when it opened in 1977, the Aquarium has fallen behind industry standards and has a growing list of serious deficiencies. Necessary maintenance projects have fallen far behind schedule. The Aquarium's estimated major maintenance needs for the next eight years are approximately \$8 million. The unoccupied Piers 62 and 63 have short-term maintenance needs of nearly \$1 million with an annual piling replacement program estimated to be another \$200,000 per year. In addition to maintenance needs, the lack of funds has made it impossible to maintain the creature collection of the original Aquarium. Although only 4% of the Aquarium's current operating budget requires a subsidy from the City of Seattle's General Fund, the physical plant is being neglected, new exhibits are not being funded, the facility is understaffed, and programs are being cut back.

The proposed Master Plan calls for a facility whose main goals are education and conservation, while providing an exciting venue to appreciate the rich aquatic environments of the Puget Sound region. To this end, three principle exhibit pavilions are proposed; Puget Sound: Inland Sea; Pacific Rim: Emerald Sea and Pacific Rim Sampler. Animals will be housed in the exhibit that reflects their natural habitat. In addition, a new entry to the Aquarium is proposed, to establish a strong streetfront /waterfront presence that the current facility lacks. The cost of this substantial remodel is estimated to be between \$80 and \$100 million dollars, with an additional \$9-\$30 million for improvements to the adjacent Waterfront Park. To meet this financial need, a new governance structure for the Aquarium akin to a non-profit Public Development Authority, is being researched.

Discussion

Dubrow: I have been around long enough to have seen a number of plans for Piers 62 and 63, from a cooperative agreement with the Seattle Arts Commission to an offer by the Seattle Jaycees. What implications does this plan have for those previous commitments?

- Shiota:** There are no adopted plans for Piers 62 and 63. The Jaycees' proposal never came to fruition.
- Dubrow:** I am also concerned about the historic pattern of the waterfront, especially the pattern of individual piers and sheds. This proposal is a dramatic increase in size and scale that disrupts the pattern of the waterfront at the southern end. I would ask you to reflect and think about another approach to planning. It would appear this proposal is the result of looking at the internal functional needs of the facility and letting those needs generate a building. Another approach is to look at the existing pattern of the waterfront and generate a building from the outside in. By marrying these processes I think you will be able to generate a form that respects the urban design of the waterfront.
- Shiota:** Our consultants, Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis prepared The Central Waterfront Architectural Report that addresses historical patterns along the waterfront. That report informed our design decisions about the building. The angled shape of the building attempts to reflect the historical pattern along the waterfront.
- Foley:** You have not been timid in your approach, and I commend your effort. I think you are very wise to address the difficult issue of governance, as it will be a critical consideration in the long term development and operation of the facility. You have shown some very compelling images of potential exhibits. As you proceed and refine the plan we will be very interested in seeing how the facility will fit in with its context and how it will respond to the historical spatial rhythm of the piers. You mentioned that similar facilities in the industry have been financially self-sustaining and that you believe this aquarium will be also. We will be interested in your projections that demonstrate your expectations that this facility will be self-sustaining.
- Dubrow:** The Design Commission would like to help you in your efforts to reconcile the issues of preservation and program.
- Swift:** It appears as if the Aquarium will require a public /private partnership to accomplish the needed renovation. Given the Commission's particular interest in public/private partnerships, we will be most interested to follow the further development of the Aquarium's governance and operation structure.
- Shiota:** I would suggest you look at the Aquarium governance study prepared by Cedar River Associates.
- ACTION:** **No action, update only. The Commission strongly supports the notion of a non-profit funding mechanism for the renovation and operation of the Aquarium.**

030697.6 Project: **PIPERS CREEK: STREETS TO SOUND**
Phase: Concept Development
Catlin Evans, Consultant
Anna Leach, Middle School Student
Noel Renggli, Middle School Student
Cindsay Sykes, Middle School Student
Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Interpretive and street signs are proposed for the Pipers Creek: Streets to Sound Project. Students at Bright Middle School have been working on sign and pamphlet design. Proposed slogan for the signs include: “Help Pipers Creek from Going Down the Drain”, “Remember Pipers Creek is Going Down the Drain”, and “Dump No Waste, Pipers Creek is Going Down the Drain”. The interpretive signs will have a map of the watershed, the slogan, an elevation drawing of the storm drain’s journey to the Sound and a description of the difference between storm and sanitary sewers.

Discussion

Dubrow: I think it is a great idea to have brochures on the interpretive signs. The next question is who is going to replace them when the holders are empty? How will you keep the program going?

Evans: The program is designed so that we will continue into other neighborhoods in the watershed. We did promise to take care of the signs and brochures for 5 years - the school phone number will be on the brochure.

Evans: A large portion of our funding comes from the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team. They feel pretty strongly about having a positive, rather than a negative message for the slogan.

Hansmire: I rather like the slogan, Pipers Creek is down the drain.

Dubrow: I know you said the image of the fish is not yet developed, however in the schematic design it looks like a Christian symbol. I wonder what you are thinking of for the form of the fish. I would not want people to misinterpret your logo. “Dump No Waste” is a pretty strong directive of what not to do. Have you thought about a message that tells people what to do? Practical advice along the lines of “instead of doing this, so that” is more likely to change people’s behavior.

ACTION: **The Commission enthusiastically supports the project and endorses the important use of color in the signs to effectively convey the message. The Commission offered to work further with the Seattle Transportation Department and the project team if needed.**

030697.7

MUNICIPAL COURTS

Working Discussion

Attendees: Donald Brubeck, Former Landmarks Board Member
 Susan Boyle, Former Landmarks Board Member
 Beth Chave, Urban Conservation Division
 Marty Curry, Seattle Planning Commission
 Karen Gordon, Urban Conservation Division
 Bruce Hayashi, Seattle Planning Commission
 Norma Miller, Executive Services Department
 Kenichi Nakano, Seattle Planning Commission
 Sue Partidge, Executive Services Department
 Clint Pehrson, Allied Arts
 Dennis Ryan, Seattle Planning Commission
 Mimi Sheridan, Allied Arts Preservation Committee
 Elen Southard,

Time: 1.5 hour (N/C)

The Seattle Design Commission hosted a discussion on the Dexter Horton lobby option for the relocation of the Municipal Courts. The Design Commission was seeking professional advice on the issues of the City's proposed use of a historic resource. Members of the Design Commission have been participating in a Working Group on the Municipal Center planning effort along with Seattle Planning Commissioners and representatives from the Citizens Finance Review Board and the Key Tower Citizens Advisory Panel. The relocation of the Municipal Courts to the Dexter Horton building is a key component in the larger Municipal Center planning effort.

At the last Design Commission meeting, Hansmire updated the full Commission on a February 12th meeting regarding the proposal of the Dexter Horton as the future location of the Municipal Courts. Facility Planning staff from the Executive Services Department, Municipal Court Administrator Ken Klimusko, the design consultant for the relocation and a member of the Seattle Planning Commission were in attendance. In order to accommodate the required eight courtrooms, an additional floor would have to be added at the mezzanine level of the two story space in what is currently suite 200 of the Dexter Horton (the Land Use section of the Department of Construction and Land Use). Other modifications to the building and site would include the addition of a below grade entry ramp from Cherry Street, installation of security systems at the entries at 2nd and 3rd Avenues, and permanent screening of the 2nd and mezzanine windows on the south face of the Dexter Horton building. After hearing Hansmire's recap of the issues, Commissioners suggested convening a small discussion group on the Dexter Horton lobby conversion option to include interested parties in the historic preservation and urban design communities.

Commissioners recognized an overlap between the historic preservation interests and responsibilities of the Urban Conservation Division and the Design Review responsibilities of the Design Commission, particularly when there is new design contemplated in a historic context. The Commission therefore invited staff from Urban Conservation and past Landmarks Board members, along with representatives from the AIA and Allied Arts Preservation Committees to discuss the implications of relocating the Municipal Courts in the Dexter Horton.

The Design Commission was not so much looking for an opinion on the current Landmark designation of the Dexter Horton building as much as it was seeking guidance on the relative historic value of the Dexter Horton bank lobby space. The issue concerning the Design Commission was not one of asking that the Dexter Horton two-story banking space be designated a historic landmark. The discussion reflected a debate between strengthening the Landmarks designation versus emphasizing a strategy for stewardship of historic resources. There was extended discussion around the nature of Landmark Designation as a regulatory process with legal constraints. Specific comments and individual personal opinions stated throughout the discussion by those in attendance follow:

Landmarks Designation and Historic Significance

- The existing Landmarks designation of the Dexter Horton building exterior and lobbies needs to be treated with consideration in whatever process that goes forward regarding modifications made to the building. Issues regarding the installation of security systems in the lobbies and possible alterations to the exterior as a result of the Cherry Street ramp will have to be resolved. Changes made to any part of the building that falls under the Landmarks designation must be approved by the Landmarks Board.
- The Seattle Landmarks ordinance “Purpose and Policy” reasons have not changed in the ten years or so since the designation of the Dexter Horton building. However, societal values regarding historic structures have shifted from those concerned solely with the architectural value and condition of a building to those that more broadly encompass the institutional and cultural significance of a building to the history of the City. The Dexter Horton building is at the center of what was once the commercial neighborhood of the City, and as such, is a physical artifact of that era.
- Some alterations made to date in the Dexter Horton interior are reversible. There is concern that the significant proposed modifications would be permanent and immutable.

Stewardship

- Although the City of Seattle does not own a small collection of historic structures, it is the community’s leader in promoting the “conservation” of its urban fabric. In this role, the City sets a standard for the care and management of its own buildings in dealing with other governmental agencies and property owners. Concern about the building modifications needed to construct municipal courts in the Dexter Horton arises because the two story high banking space will be permanently removed in this project.
- Preservation in a government regulation context is not enough. The role of the City in regards to its historic properties should be expanded to one of stewardship.

- The City has an opportunity to set an example of excellent stewardship by following its own policies. Furthermore, the City has an obligation to a stewardship role for the care of historic buildings.
- The City needs to set an example of care and appropriate use of the historical buildings in its possession.

National Identity

- Seattle has a national reputation built upon being a leader in historic preservation, public art and urban forestry. By undermining the very values that have made Seattle a national leader, the city risks losing valuable assets, among those its national identity as a leader in preservation.

Equal Consideration

- Adequate space size and lowest construction cost are the major factors now driving the decision on a new location for the municipal courts. The loss of the historic building's two-story banking space should be a consideration when making this decision. The project might indeed proceed as planned, but it would be better if a decision was made after also considering urban conservation issues equally with those of size and cost. It would seem this consideration is essential if we are to retain urban conservation as a meaningful community objective.